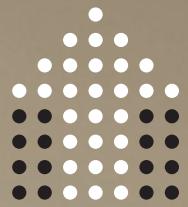


The South King Council of Human Services

A Matter of Need



How children and families are struggling

to survive and thrive in South King County...

and why it should matter to you.

Life in South King County.

It's a great place to raise a family.

People of rich diversity and solid values. Close-knit neighborhoods and wide open spaces. Small towns and modern suburbs. More house for the money. For many who live in South King County, this lifestyle isn't just stereotype. It's reality.

But for many others, life in South King County is a day-to-day struggle.

A struggle to pay the rent. To put food on the table. To keep kids warm and safe.

Here, thousands of families are barely hanging on – in many ways, finding it harder to get by than their counterparts in Seattle and other parts of the county.

Here, it's a matter of survival. It's a matter of need. And it should matter to all of us.

More families, more poverty, more needs



South King County* has the largest share of the county's total population, more of its children and a much higher proportion of households with children. It has the highest number of families living below the poverty level and the largest number of single-parent households. In South King County, more people are on food stamps and in the state's Temporary Aid to Needy Families program (aka welfare) than in any other part of the county. The percentage of South King County public school students in the federal Free or Reduced Price Lunch program is nearly three times higher than in North or East King County.

It's statistics like these that come as a shock to those who assume that inner-city Seattle and the fast-growing, multi-cultural Eastside share the largest burden of need in King County**. And, indeed, many families in those areas are struggling, too.

But it's South King County – with its disproportionately large share of young, poor and immigrant families with children – where the need outpaces the funding for services to help these struggling families get on their feet... and stay there.

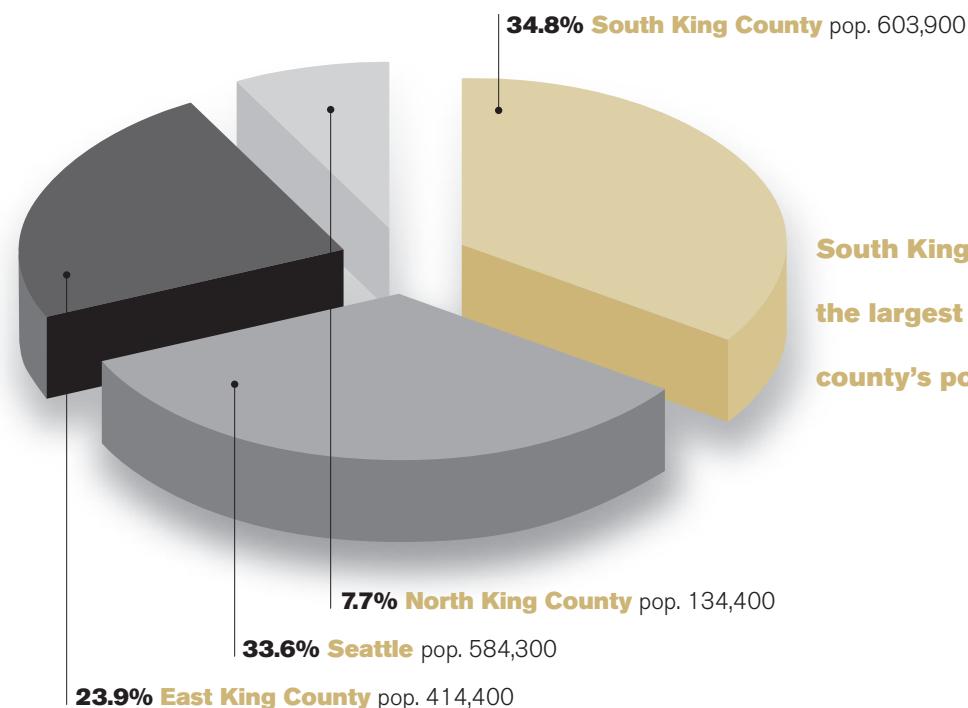
The data, statistics, charts and graphs that follow paint the need vividly. But remember, the single mom working three jobs isn't a number on a chart. The babies crying for food aren't statistics. The domestic abuse victim searching for a safe, affordable place to live isn't a percentage point. We're talking about people – a lot of them. And it's the *people* who matter.

* South King County includes the communities of Algona, Auburn, Black Diamond, Burien, Covington, Des Moines, Enumclaw, Federal Way, Kent, Maple Valley, Normandy Park, Pacific, Renton, SeaTac, Tukwila, Vashon Island and unincorporated King County located south of White Center and Seattle.

** Seattle: Seattle city limits plus White Center; North King County: Shoreline to Woodinville; East King County: Lake Washington east to the Cascade crest

King County Population

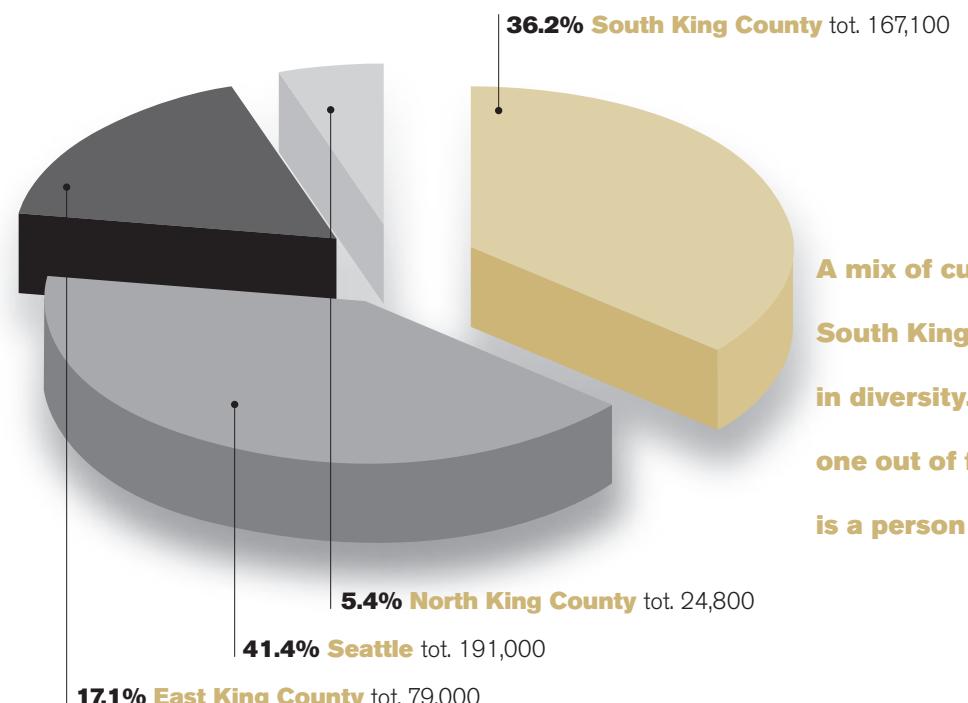
Total King County Population: 1,737,000



South King County has the largest share of the county's population.

Race/Ethnicity

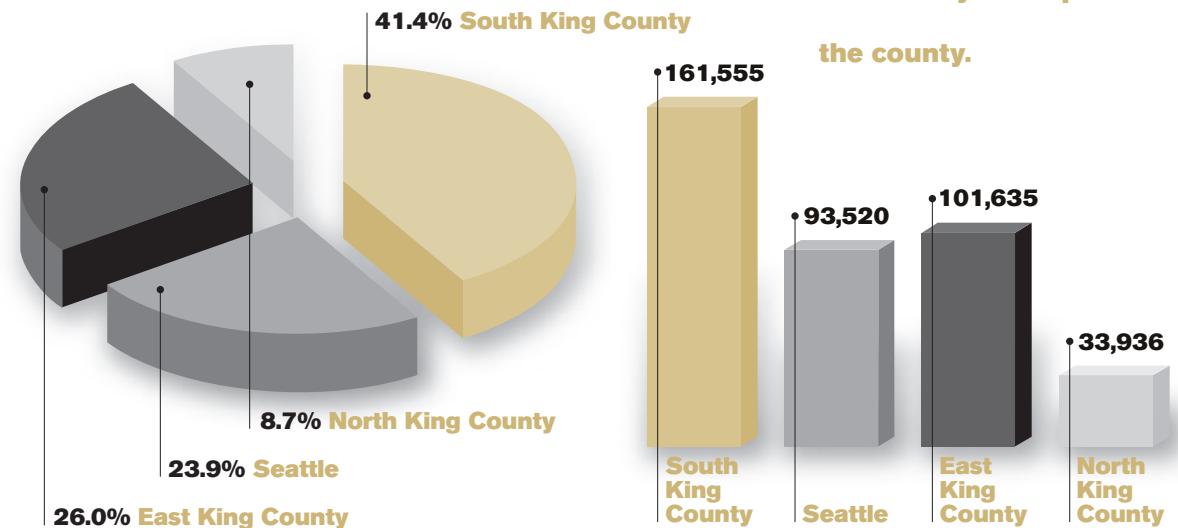
Total Persons of Color in King County: 461,900



A mix of cultures makes South King County rich in diversity. More than one out of four residents is a person of color.

Children

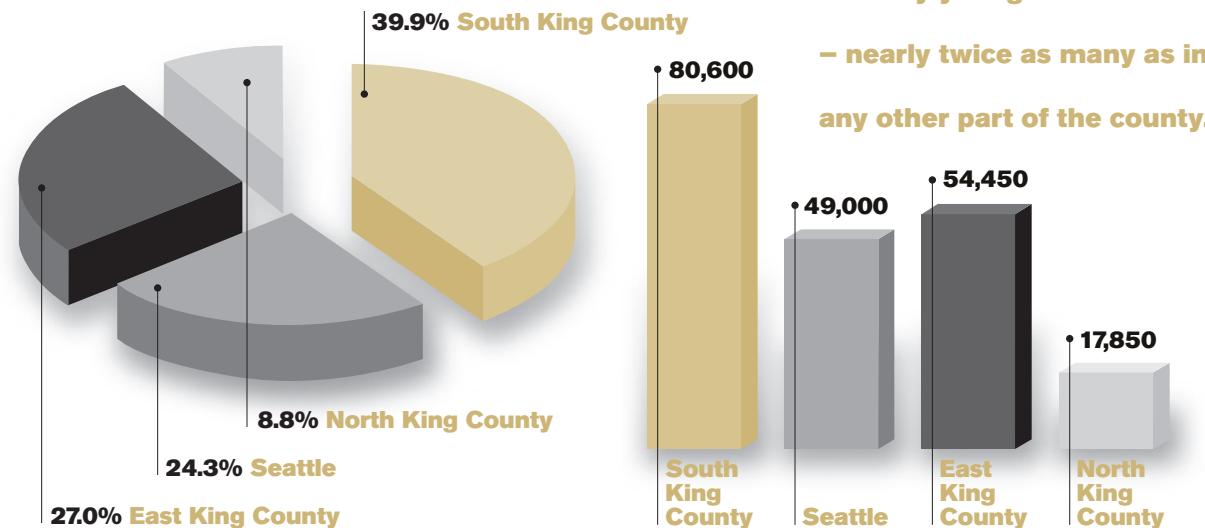
Percent Share of Children in King County



More children live south than in any other part of the county.

Households with Children

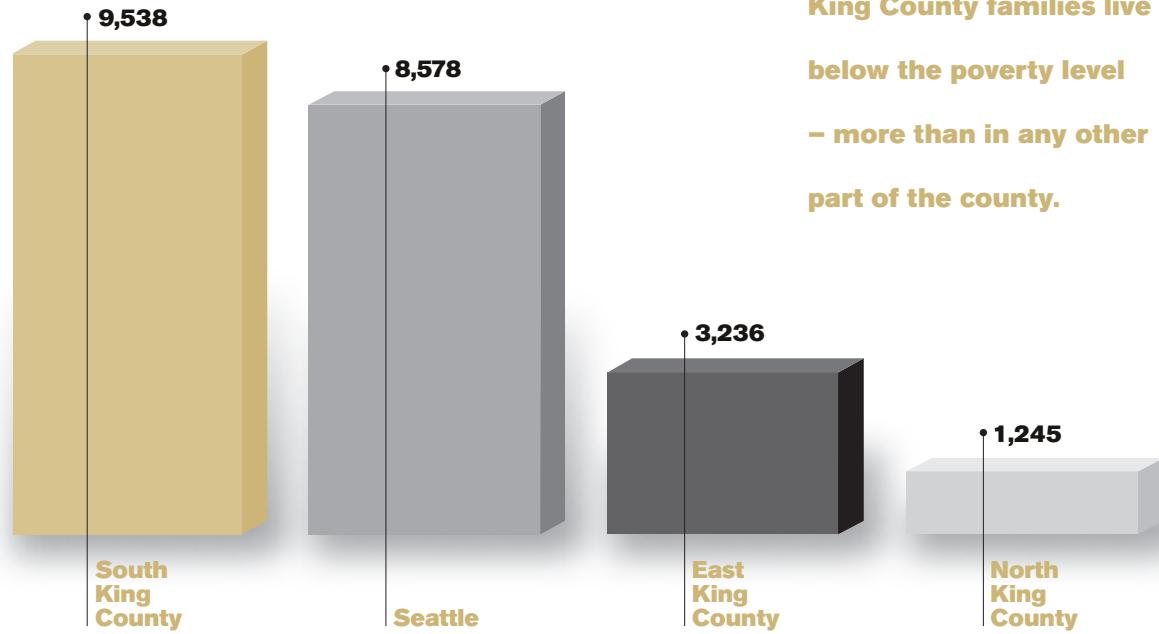
Percent Share of King County Households with Children



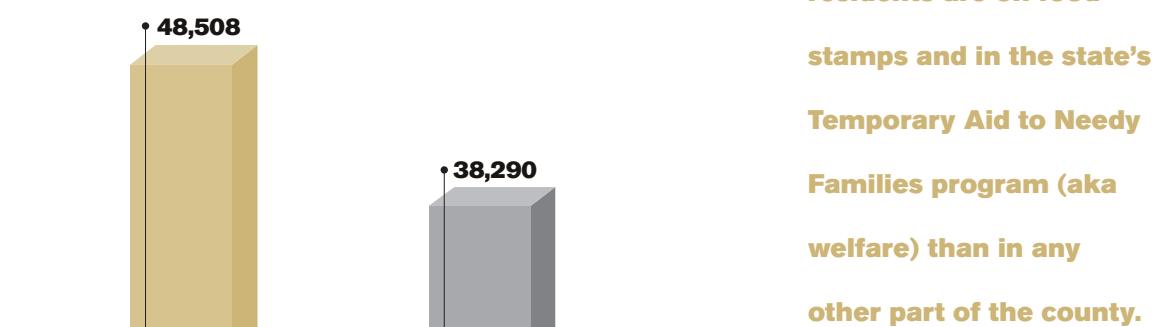
South King County is home to many young families – nearly twice as many as in any other part of the county.



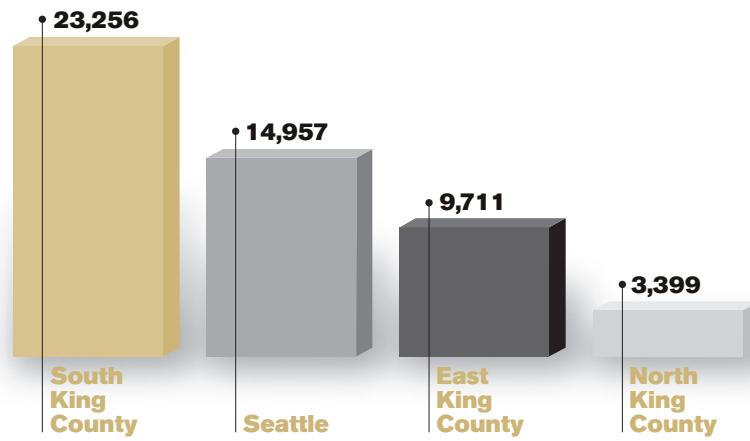
Poverty



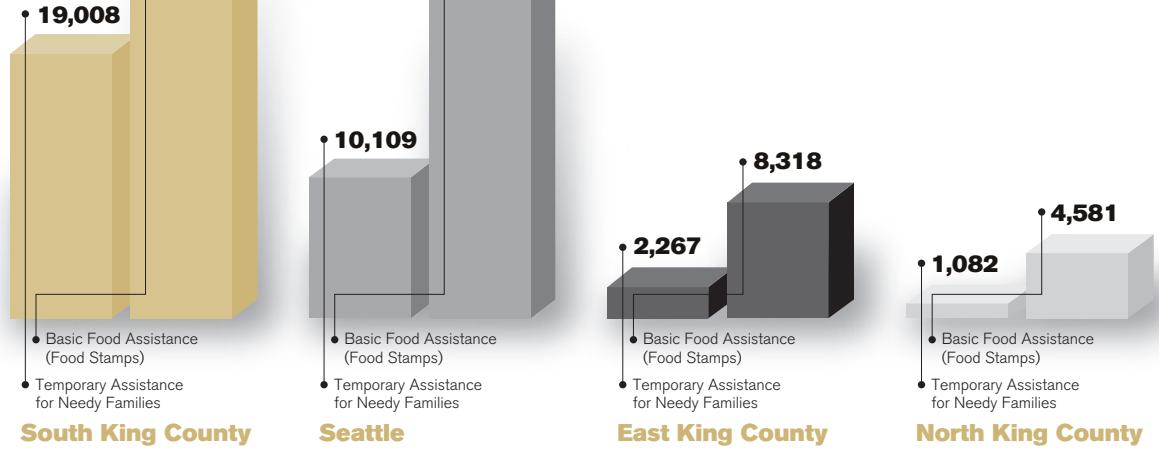
State Assistance



Single-Parent Homes

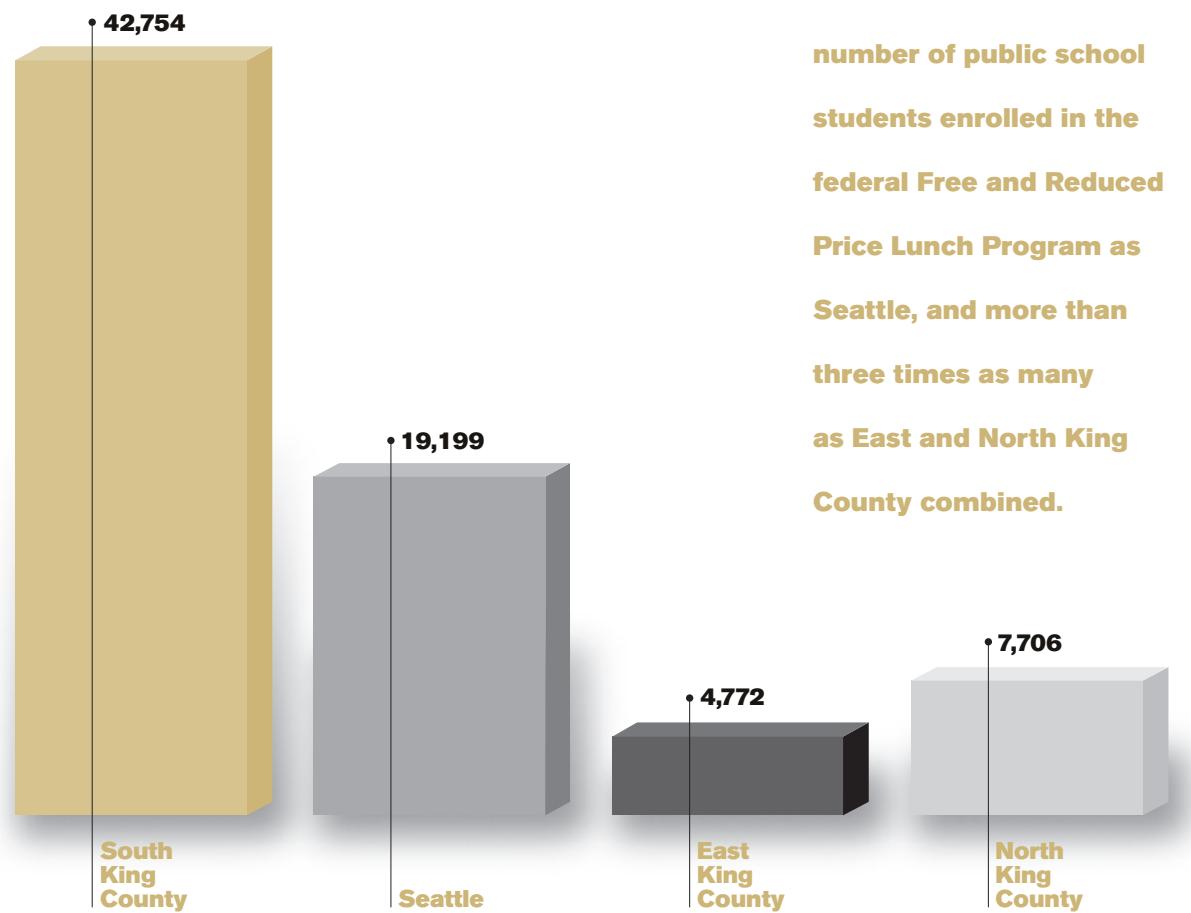


More than one out of every three households with kids in South King County is headed by a single parent.





School Lunch Aid



South King County has more than twice the number of public school students enrolled in the federal Free and Reduced Price Lunch Program as Seattle, and more than three times as many as East and North King County combined.



A matter of need: One family's story

Yaza and Melonie moved to South King County from East Africa in 2001, fleeing a war-torn country in fear for their lives. With 5-year-old daughter Gaia and another child on the way, the couple was eager to take advantage of an offer from Yaza's cousin for a job in his small manufacturing company. But within a few months, the company went bankrupt. Yaza found himself unemployed in an economy that was quickly worsening. Soon, the family was homeless.

"My babies needed food. They had to go to the doctor. And we had no place to live," Melonie recalls.

Through the Multi-Service Center in Federal Way, the family was able to find transitional housing. They became regulars at a food bank in nearby Des Moines and secured grocery store vouchers through Catholic Community Services. Yaza enrolled in job training courses at the Refugee Federation Service Center in Kent, while Melonie got the pre-natal care she needed through the Healthcare for the Homeless Program and Community Health Centers of King County. Gaia ate two meals a day at her school through the Free and Reduced Price Lunch Program. Her mom and dad found daycare through Childcare Resources while they looked for work and a permanent home for the family.

Today, Yaza, Melonie, Gaia and baby Michael are living in their own apartment. Yaza has a new job, and so does Melonie. They are beginning to enjoy life in South King County – a life that began in desperation and fear for the future, but has now turned hopeful.

This one family's experience – a melding of many real-life stories into one – exemplifies the needs that exist in South King County. Refugees facing barriers of language and culture, young families seeking stability, jobless and homeless parents whose kids need food and medical care. And, it represents the many happy endings that are possible... if we realize that this matter of need is up to us to resolve.

Why it matters: Disparities in funding for South King County's human service needs

King County is fortunate to have many agencies to help meet the needs of individuals and families facing homelessness, health care issues, domestic violence, hunger and other struggles. While these needs do indeed exist countywide, it is clear that the county's most pressing human service concerns – like a majority of its people – reside in South King County.

Unfortunately, while much of the need is centered in South King County, much of the support to meet those needs is not.

Funding from county and state government tends to favor other parts of the county, with a disproportionately smaller share of funds targeted to South King County-based

programs. Foundations and corporations – most of which are located in Seattle or on the Eastside – often tend to fund those charitable endeavors that are located closest to where they are, instead of focusing on where the greatest need might be. Philanthropic individuals, who also live predominantly in Seattle or East King County, likewise support charities closer to home.

This gap between need and funding is growing more and more dramatic every day. Immigrants, needy children, isolated seniors and poor families are seeking a better life in South King County in greater numbers than ever before. We call on the government agencies, foundations, corporations and other funders with the power to change their lives to fill that gap.

**It's a matter of need,
a matter of hope.**



DESIGN: DavidOwenHastings.com

WRITING & PROJECT MANAGEMENT: Moore Ink. PR

The South King Council of Human Services

The mission of the South King Council of Human Services (SKCHS) is to enhance the quality, availability and accessibility of health and human services in South King County. The membership of this volunteer council includes non-profit and government health and human service agencies, city and county human service planners, United Way of King County, churches and interested citizens.

SKCHS is committed to promoting cooperation, coordination and collaboration among its members and with the community as a whole for the purpose of effectively and efficiently providing care and services to people in need within our communities.

For more information, call 206-461-5055.

This publication produced in 2005, in partnership with United Way of King County.

DATA SOURCES: 2000 U.S. Census, 2004 Washington Department of Social and Health Services, 2004 Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.